Mr W Branscombe
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Northern Messenger

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A Christmas Wish.

(By Adelaide A. Procter.)

Oh, to have dwelt in Bethlehem
When the star of the Lord shone bright!
To have sheltered the holy wanderers
On that blessed Christmas night!
To have kissed the tender, wayworn feet
Of the mother undefiled,
And, with reverent wonder and deep delight,
To have tended the Holy Child!

Hush! such a glory was not for thee;
But that care may still be thine;
For are there not little ones still to aid
For the sake of the Child divine?
Are there no wandering pilgrims now,
To thy heart and thy home to take?
Are there no mothers whose weary hearts
You can comfort for His dear sake?

Oh, to have knelt at Jesus' feet,
And to have learnt His heavenly lore!
To have listened the gentle lessons He taught
On mountain, and sea, and shore!
While the rich and the mighty knew Him not,
To have meekly done His will,
Hush! for the worldly reject Him yet,
You can serve and love Him still.
Time cannot silence His mighty words,
And though ages have fled away,
His gentle accents of love divine
Speak to your soul to-day.

In the pure soul, although it sing or pray,
The Christ is born anew from day to day;
The life that knoweth Him shall bide apart
And keep eternal Christmas in the heart.

CHRISTMAS NUMBER 1901

Christmas Holly.

The use of holly for Christmas decorations dates back at least to the founding of the Roman Saturnalia, for the plant was dedicated to Saturn, and regarded as an emblem of peace and good-will. As such, the Romans were accustomed to put a spray of ilex (holly) into the packages of presents sent to one another at this time. Though this was a pagan habit, its sentiment was sweet. The fact that holly was held by the imaginative poets of the age to signify resurrection, made the plant especially appropriate to this service.

The English word 'holly' comes from the employment of the tree at this holy season; and the common German names, hulsen-baum, Christ-dorn, and the Scandinavian, Christ-torn, all mean either 'holy tree' or else 'Christ's thorn tree.' These, as well as the older holm, would seem to show that as Christianity travelled westward it carried with it this symbol of peace elevated to a new and loftier significance.

Christians at the Table.

(By William T. Ellis, in 'Wellspring.')

In every Christian home it should be the practice to acknowledge, before each meal, the source of life's blessings. This is right and fitting in itself; and, moreover, it is one way of bearing witness to our dependence upon God.

The particular phrases used matter little; the head of a household usually formulates his own 'grace before meat,' and this is best. Sometimes a set form of words is asked for; I have written a number which are printed here. To these I have added several others, originally drawn from many sources, although taken by me from 'The Congregationalist's' helpful leaflet, 'Grace Before Meat.'

The custom is increasing, it seems, of using a silent blessing, or of having a blessing recited by a child. This is far better than no form of grace at all, and yet it is not to be preferred above a blessing spoken by the head of the house. The father, or the oldest male member of the family, is most appropriately the person to invoke the divine blessing and to express gratitude for the food.

FOR ANY MEAL.

For this spread table, for our home, and for all that makes life good, we give thanks to thee, our Father in heaven. Amen.

Because thou thinkest upon us, our Father, all the needs of our bodies and of our souls are met; and we thank thee. Enable us to use all thy good gifts aright, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

From thine open hand all creation is satisfied, O God. For this present food we thank thee. May it nourish us for thy service, and may our souls be fed with heavenly manna. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we would do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. So we ask thy blessing upon this meal, our Father in heaven, and offer up to thee our sincere gratitude for the loving provision which thou dost make for all our needs. Amen.

For the hand that feeds us, and the heart that loves us, and the grace that saves us, we thank thee, our Father in heaven. Upon these present gifts let thy blessing be. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Accept our gratitude, Father in heaven, for these common tokens of an uncommon love. Make us ever mindful of thy mercy, and keep us true to thee. Amen.

Lord, make us mindful of the extraordinary love which provides for us life's ordinary necessaries. Accept our thanks for the food now before us, and for him who is the bread of life. Amen.

Fit us for life's duties by this our daily food, gracious giver of good gifts, and gird our souls for victorious living by thy grace from above. Amen.

Many are the ways in which thou hast chosen to express thy love to us, blest Father in heaven; this food which is before us we acknowledge as one of them, and we thank thee. Help us to live gratefully, for the Redeemer's praise. Amen.

For the food now before us here, and for the Lamb's feast which await us above, we give thanks unto thee, our Father and our Saviour. Amen.

May the loving thought which provides for all our bodies' needs throughout the recurring days, make us mindful of our soul's obligations to thee, gracious Father above, whom we praise. Amen.

Sanctify to us all life's ordinary blessings, we pray, O Lord, that they may come to us freighted with grateful thoughts of thee, our Father and our God. Amen.

FOR THE MORNING MEAL.

The night's rest, the morning's light, the daily food, and the hour's duty, are all thy good gifts to us, Father in heaven, and we thank thee for them. Help us to honor thee in them all. Amen.

AT NOONTIME.

In the midst of the day's duties we bow in humble acknowledgment of thy mercy and providence, O Lord. Refresh us by our noonday meal, and accept the thankfulness of our hearts, continuing unto us thy favor and presence. Amen.

FOR THE EVENING MEAL.

The day that is passing has been filled with thy goodness, our Father in heaven. As we gather round this table, spread by thy love, we offer unto thee thanksgiving and praise. We pray that thoughts of the Giver may come to us in all thy gifts, and that thine everyday mercies may be reminders of thine eternal love. Still bless and guard us, we ask, in Jesus' name. Amen.

FOR A SPECIAL OCCASION.

May the Christ of Cana be present with us at this festal time. Sanctify to us all the relations of human fellowship. Bless these tokens of thy bounty and accept our gratitude for the joys which come to us through thy goodness. Be thou a guest at this board, and abide with us all forever. Amen.

SOME SELECTED FORMS.

The following are from 'Grace Before Meat':—

Bless this food to our use and us in thy service. Amen.

For these and all thy mercies we give thee thanks, O God. Amen.

We receive these gifts, our Father, from thy hand with loving gratitude and adoration, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessed art thou, O Lord, who givest good to all flesh! Fill our hearts with joy and gladness, that having always what is sufficient for us, we may abound in every good work in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

We recognize in these mercies the hand of the Giver, O thou who givest liberally and upbraidest not. May we in return give ourselves unreservedly to thee. Amen.

O thou who hast given us the bread from heaven, help us to receive gifts of nourishment for the body in grateful remembrance of the gift of life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We thank thee for health and work, O Lord our God, and for this food which sustains us in the midst of toil. Remember with mercy all who hunger and are not fed, and tenderly lift up all who fall beneath life's burdens. Amen.

We thank thee, O Father, for the light of day, and the light in our hearts because thou art with us. Care for us in toil as thou hast cared for us during sleep, and bless this food to our use, and our lives in thy service. Amen.

Our Heavenly Father, wilt thou bless to us our evening meal. Forgive all that thou hast seen amiss this day in thought, word, or deed, and have us this night in thy holy keeping, for Christ's sake. Amen.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Amen.

Lord, we thank Thee Thou dost heed
Our returning daily need;
Bless to us this food, we pray,
Be our Guest throughout the day.

We thank Thee, Father, wise and good,
For home and friends and daily food.
Bless to our use the food we take,
And keep us all for Jesus' sake.

Medical Missionary Training Institute

AT AGRA IN INDIA.

(To the Editor of the 'Northern Messenger.')

Sir,—Will you very kindly allow a little space in your paper for the following few words, from India, which I wish to send to our Christian sisters in Canada, who have taken interest in crusade work, through Mrs. Cole, of Westmount.

Dear Sisters in Canada,

I expect this will reach you about Christmas Day, so we wish you all a merry, merry Christmas, and a happy New Year.

We realize your responsibility as Christians as those professing to be the followers of Christ.

We, the Indian brothers and sisters, are really interested and instructed in several ways, both bodily and mentally and spiritually, by reading the 'Messenger' and 'The Sabbath,' which you have been so kindly sending us from time to time. We thank you very much for all the trouble you have taken in sending those papers to us.

After reading, we pass those papers on to our Hindu and Mohammedan friends who can read English.

Papers that have been sent to Agra have been coming in safely.

Miss Nellie Asker, of Campbellton, and Mrs. Cole, of Westmount, wrote very kind letters to the undersigned who is deeply interested.

There came another nice letter lately from Misses F. L. and Lily M. Shaw, of Oak Lake, Manitoba.

You may like to hear a little about our Medical Missionary Training Institute.

The aims and objects of the Institute are well set forth in the name 'Medical Missionary Training Institute.' By its favorable terms it places a thorough training in evangelistic and medical work within easy reach of any deserving young man in India. It furnishes a safe and comfortable home to the young men while they prepare for their life work.

No doubt, it is a quite unique Institution for preparing our Indian Christian young men to do their best work in their respective mission fields, 'Heal the sick and preach the Gospel.'

The course requires four years, which gives a good medical education with diploma of a Government medical school.

We have our daily Bible study, and also we are trained to take an interest in and do actual missionary work among the poor and ignorant people.

We all live, dine, study and pray together in the most perfect harmony.

Our principal, (of the Institution) the Rev. Dr. C. S. Valentine, sent by the Medical Missionary Society of Edinburgh, has spent his forty years' service by Nov. 12, 1901, in India. He is expected to retire in the beginning of 1902. We are much indebted to our principal who has spent the best part of his life in doing good to others during these past forty years in India.

A very happy New Year to you all; may it be the best you ever knew.

On behalf of the brothers and sisters.

Yours truly,

DUNDEE L. JOSHEE,
Medical Student, M. M. T. Institute,
Agra, India.

Nov. 12, 1901.

Meekness and Humility.

Tell me, is not that what is needed in our work? That the spirit of tender compassion and of gentleness should breathe in every utterance about the people whose souls we are seeking—should be the mark of Christ's presence. And then more love would not only make us gentle, but, as with Christ himself, it would also be the power and the inspiration of a divine zeal, so that we would sacrifice all.

If we loved others with the love of God, how much more power there would be in our work, how much more sacrifice of time and of ease in praying to God for souls; how much more intercession! Oh! if we loved aright, how much more sacrifice of comfort! how often would we work as I read of a couple of missionaries in China some years ago, asking: 'What more can we sacrifice for Jesus?'—Andrew Murray.

The Find-the-Place Almanac

TEXTS IN PROVERBS.

Dec. 22, Sun.—He is also a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

Dec. 23, Mon.—Remove far from me vanity and lies.

Dec. 24, Tues.—The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rock.

Dec. 25, Wed.—There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Dec. 26, Thur.—Wait on the Lord and he shall save thee.

Dec. 27, Fri.—The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord.

Dec. 28, Sat.—The name of the Lord is a strong tower.

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BOYS AND GIRLS

The Fairy Godmother.

('Sunday at Home.')

I.

'And it is Christmas Eve,' sighed little Judith Manners. She was sitting in the window with Roland and Eleanor on either side of her, and she looked out into the dull street with large mournful eyes, from which the tears were not far distant. The younger ones knew of what she was thinking; they also remembered, though not so distinctly, the beautiful home in which they had all been born, the father whose delight it had been to indulge even their fancied wants, the merry Christmastides with parties and presents, and every kind of festivity. It had all come to an end three years ago, when Judith was eight years old, and little Eleanor only four. Their father died suddenly, and after his death there was so little money left that the children and their mother had to go to live in a tiny house in a narrow street, and could only keep one quite young servant. Mrs. Manners went out every day to give music and drawing lessons; but though she worked hard, the payment was so scanty that the children's clothes were worn and mended, they sometimes dined on pudding only, and Judith often ate her bread dry, because she saw how little butter there was.

It was not even proper Christmas weather; cold it most certainly was but it was a damp raw cold, that had nothing cheerful about it, and the rain fell in a persistent drizzle. Their mother had gone out to do a little shopping, but the rain kept the children indoors.

'Tell us about Christmas Eve at home, Judith,' asked Eleanor; but Judith who by her constant tales had kept the memory of old times alive in the younger ones' minds was in no story-telling humor to-day. She continued to gaze silently into the wet, deserted street and took no part in a lively discussion between Roland and Eleanor as to what had become of Santa Claus.

'He must have lost our address,' decided Eleanor 'we have never had him since we came away from home, or perhaps—Judith, Judy,' and she gently shook her sister, 'don't people ever have any Christmas after their fathers die?'

'Yes, of course, they do,' cried Roland, with the scornful superiority of his ten years, 'there is the Robinsons—oh, be quiet, Judy, a fellow can't be always minding grammar—there is the Robinsons, I say, and their father is dead, but they have the jolliest times.'

Eleanor sighed. 'I wish we did,' she said, 'we haven't any Christmas. I wish—oh, Judith, let up play at three wishes—you first.'

Judith turned round from the window, and entered into the play. 'I know what I am going to wish,' she said, 'and I will have my turn last. You begin, Nelly.' Eleanor shut her eyes very tightly and considered for a minute.

'I wish,' she began slowly, 'I wish I had five shillings, and then you should all have beautiful presents.'

'Why didn't you wish for more while you were about it,' asked Judith. 'Five shillings won't buy much. Now, Roland.'

'Are we to have three wishes each, or three between us?' enquired Roland.

'Three between us; one each. Make haste.'

'There isn't any hurry,' said Roland, kicking his feet against the bars of his chair. 'Percy Robinson told me they are going to have a jolly big party on Tuesday, with a conjurer and all kinds of games. I wish I could go to that.'

'Well, of all silly wishes, that is the silliest,' declared Judith, as seriously as though the play were a reality. 'The idea of wasting a wish on one evening's pleasure. You are just like the man in the fairy tale, who wished for a sausage and had it stuck on to his nose.'

'It was his wife who wished it to be stuck to the end of his nose,' retorted Roland, 'so she was the most silly, because they had to waste the last wish getting it off again. Now, Judy, it is your turn. Let us see how good your wish will be.'

'Better than either of yours,' said Judith, 'I wish that we could find mother's fairy-god-mother.'

Roland and Nelly clapped their hands and

SANTA CLAUS HAS LOST THE ADDRESS.

declared that was the best wish that could be thought of, for of all the tales that had delighted them from infancy, none equalled their mother's description of her fairy-godmother, Lady Eleanor Ashley, who had been so good to her in childhood, but of whom she had heard nothing for many years. They always spoke of her as the 'fairy-godmother,' and were fond of supposing what she would do if she came to see them.

'If she could only come in some day,' went on Judith, 'it would be just like a book. She would be quite old, you know, a beautiful old lady thin and upright, with lovely silver hair, bright eyes, and a pretty pink color in her cheeks. She would be most elegantly dressed, and would walk in, leaning on an ebony cane with a gold top.'

'And a carriage,' put in Roland.

'Oh, a beautiful carriage and pair, with two men-servants. She and mother would fall into each other's arms, then mother would introduce us. She would love you best, Nelly, because you are named after her.'

'No, you, because you are the eldest,' said Eleanor.

'And she would be very fond of Roland, because he is a boy,' continued Judith; 'old ladies always like boys. She would be a widow, and all her children should be dead, so she would adopt all of us.'

'Oh!' interrupted Eleanor dolefully. 'I don't want to be adopted. I would much rather be mother's little girl.'

'She would adopt mother, too,' explained Judith, 'we should be just like her grandchildren, and ——'

'Why, children!' And at that moment a sweet voice made them turn quickly, to see their mother in her waterproof and worn bonnet, standing in the doorway. They all ran to her at once. Roland took her basket, Judith knelt to unfasten her cloak, and Nelly began to pull off her gloves.

'Was it very wet and horrid, mother, dear?' asked, Judith. 'Oh, what a heavy basket! Why didn't you let them send the things?'

Mrs. Manners laughed, such a bright, pleasant laugh, and bent to kiss her little daughter's troubled face. 'Wet, but not horrid,' she said. 'Don't make troubles, Judith. And I am thankful to have a basket to carry. I would not have the things sent because I am so sorry for the little errand boys on a wet Christmas Eve.'

'I wish I was an errand boy,' declared Ro-

land, 'then I could go out, even if it rained, and people would give me Christmas boxes. Teddy Snow—he works at the big grocer's at the corner, got nine-and-six-pence last year. I think they have jolly times.'

Judith tossed a scornful little head. 'I wish you would not talk to common boys,' she said, 'you don't care what sort of boys you play with.'

'I don't play with him,' retorted Roland, 'I only spoke to him one day when he was waiting at the door for his basket. He is a nice clean boy, and he goes to the Sunday-school, and he hasn't any father, but he has a mother and two sisters just like me. And you are so proud and stuck up, Judith, you think nobody is good enough for you to look at,' finished Roland, getting very red and indignant as well as rather out of breath.

'Come, dear, do not quarrel on Christmas Eve,' said their mother, who came back from taking off her bonnet before Judith had time to reply. 'Judith, dear, is it not time you set the table for dinner? Roland and Nelly, run and fetch some of the things for your sister. And after dinner we must see how happy we can be because it is Christmas.'

Judith moved slowly to do her mother's bidding. After indulging in glorious dreams of being adopted by Lady Eleanor, it was rather hard to come down to such little common everyday duties, and it seemed hardly worth while to remember that her mother liked everything very straight, and that it worried her to hear the plates and glasses put on the table noisily.

They sat round the fire that afternoon, but for some reason they were not as bright as usual, the cloud on Judith's face seemed to depress the others. In answer to their mother's question about what treat they would like for Christmas, Roland began something about a pudding, but was quickly reproved by Judith who, I am sorry to say, condescended to call him a 'greedy pig.' Eleanor meekly said she would like mother to tell them a story, but the history of a wonderful Twelfth-night party given by Lady Eleanor, at which mother was queen, fell very flat because Judith, instead of being interested and asking questions as usual, sat looking into the fire in moody silence.

'I wish we were real poor people,' remarked Roland when the story had come to an abrupt end.

'I am sure we are poor enough,' said Judith, bitterly. 'And you had better not poke the fire, Roland, or it will all burn away in a minute, and mother said that box of coal must last to-day.'

'I mean quite proper poor people,' explained Roland, dropping the poker, 'the sort of people mother does not like us to call common, you know. They have much better times at Christmas than we do, because kind people send them baskets of groceries and pieces of beef, and give them treats. The ragged school in the lane is going to have ever such a jolly magic lantern to-night and buns and oranges as well.'

'And Sarah's mother has had a basket of things to make a pudding,' added little Eleanor, 'and a nice piece of beef, and a shawl for herself, and a frock for the baby.'

Mrs. Manners smiled at the little eager face and ran her fingers through Eleanor's soft, fair hair. 'So you think Sarah's mother and the ragged school-children have the best of it?' she said.

'Yes, at Christmas, mother, not always,' conceded Nelly. 'Why, mother, I have never seen a magic lantern.'

'Poor child! Well, Eleanor, it is something to look forward to. And now suppose you go and have a romp in the attic before tea.'

Roland and Eleanor ran away; Judith remained by the fire, and there was silence until an unusually deep sigh from the little girl made her mother ask,

'Why, Judith, dear, what is the matter?'

'I was thinking,' said Judith slowly, 'how very nice it would be if we could only find Lady Eleanor Ashley.'

'So that is your latest dream,' said Mrs. Manners with a smile, for Judith's airy castles were a proverb in the family. 'And why does the thought of anything so "very nice" make you sigh so deeply?'

'Because it is so unlikely to happen,' answered Judith sadly, 'and we are so poor, and everything is so wretched.' And the tears that had been so near all day overflowed at last.

'Yes, it is most unlikely.' Mrs. Manners spoke in a decided way that she often had when Judith was doleful. 'Lady Eleanor was very good to me when I was a child, but she went abroad with her husband and little boy when I was twelve, and, excepting two or three letters, I have heard nothing of her since. I think she is probably dead. As for our poverty, it would not be likely to make much difference if she came to-morrow, and surely we are not so very wretched while we have each other.'

'But — father,' sobbed Judith, and she would have been very angry if any one had told her that her tears were more for the pleasures that had gone when her father went than for that father himself.

'Yes, we have not dear father, and we miss him very much,' said Mrs. Manners, 'but we know God took him from us and some day we hope to see him again.'

'It is so hard to be poor,' repeated Judith in a low voice.

'Don't you think our heavenly Father who loves us knew best when he made us poor?' asked her mother, 'and ought we not to be brave about it, and very thankful for the good things he does give us? Only think, Judith, not one of us has been the least bit ill all this year. I feel I cannot be too thankful when I remember that one thing.'

Judith did not answer. She sat with bent head, twisting her fingers in and out of each other and tracing the pattern of the carpet with one foot. Within the last few months a spirit of discontent had crept into Judith's heart so gradually that she was scarcely aware how completely it had taken possession of her. Always given to day-dreams and castle-building she had lately set herself persistently to brood over the past and to devise means by which the pleasures they had lost might be recovered. Many a romance did her busy brain weave of unknown relatives suddenly appearing and immediately transporting the entire family to wealth and ease; and many a little act of kindness that would have pleased her mother and brightened the lives of the younger ones, was neglected because Judith was living in a fancy paradise of her own creation.

'Judith, dear,' said Mrs. Manners, at last breaking the silence, 'do not spoil your present by constantly brooding over the past and imagining the future. If poverty is such a trouble to you take it meekly and bear it bravely for his sake who "though he was rich, for our sakes became poor," and believe me, dear child, you will find pleasures even in the poverty.' Then more to herself than to Judith she repeated in a low voice,

'"What! was the promise made to thee alone?
Art thou th' excepted one?
An heir of glory without grief or pain?
Oh, vision false and vain!
There lies thy cross; beneath it meekly bow;
It fits thy stature now:
Who scornful pass it with averted eye,
'Twill crush them by-and-by.

'"Raise thy repining eyes, and take true measure
Of thine eternal treasure;
The Father of thy Lord can grudge thee nought,
The world for thee was bought,
And as this landscape broad—earth, sea and sky
All centres in thine eye,
So all God does, if rightly understood,
Shall work thy final good."'

Mrs. Manners was very fond of poetry, and as according to Roland, she 'knew heaps of it,' she often repeated verses to the children. They loved to listen to her sweet, low voice even though they did not always understand all she said to them; and as she would explain it to them as well as she could and answer any number of questions, these recitations had become one of their favorite amusements. Judith, however, did not appreciate the selection her mother had made on this occasion, she gave her shoulders an impatient twist, and bent her 'repining eyes' obstinately on the floor. At that moment Roland and Eleanor rushed into the room in wild excitement.

'Mother, mother, it is clearing up, it is going to be a fine evening, it does not rain at all. Oh, mother dear, won't you take us out to see the shops?'

The rain had certainly ceased, the pavements were drying, so tea was hurried over and directly after they went out into the gaily lighted High Street, which was full of delights. To see the shops lit up was a novelty, and the busy, merry crowd that passed up and down was most interesting.

'Look at that sugar Santa Claus,' said Roland, as they stood for a moment outside the large sweet shop; and Eleanor, for whom Santa Claus had a great attraction, turned quickly.

'That is Father Christmas,' she said, 'is he the same as Santa Claus?'

At that instant a fair young girl two or three years older than Judith came out of the shop, followed by an elderly woman servant who carried several parcels. Almost unconsciously she smiled at the intent childish face, which immediately brightened and dimpled into the sweetest smile in return.

'Come on, Nelly,' called Judith sharply, and Eleanor ran on to join her mother. As she did so she felt a gentle touch on her arm.

'A merry Christmas, little one,' said a voice behind her and something was slipped into her hand.

'Mother,' she exclaimed, as soon as she had recovered from her astonishment, 'Mother, look at this beautiful box of chocolate. Who could it be, mother? Was it Santa Claus? Did he come into the street because he doesn't know where we live? And it looked like a young lady.'

Mrs. Manners laughed and said she really did not know the habits of Santa Claus. 'But I think we have seen all the shops,' she added, 'so we had better go home.'

'Oh, not yet, mother,' pleaded Nelly, 'do let us go through the lane first. It is quite early, and I want to see if the poor people are having a nice Christmas.'

'The lane,' as the children always called it, was a row of very poor houses that ran along at the back of the street in which Mrs. Manners lived. The little girls' bedroom window looked into it, and the joys and griefs, amusements and occupations of the children in the lane were an unfailing source

of interest to Eleanor. This evening it looked very dark after the brightly lighted High Street, and she was greatly disappointed.

'I don't belive they know it is Christmas Eve?' she said, standing on tip-toe to look in at an unshuttered window through which she saw a weary looking woman and a boy mangling, a little girl folding clothes and rocking a cradle, in which lay a crying baby, with her foot. 'I thought quite poor people always had baskets, and went out to teas and magic lanterns. Oh, dear!'—as some rough boys ran violently against her, and she had difficulty in keeping on her feet—'mother, I wish I could make them a Christmas. I had rather do that than find your fairy godmother.'

'Well, you can't,' snapped Judith, irritated by the allusion.

'Mother, couldn't we?' appealed Nelly, 'isn't there any little thing we could give them just to let them know it is Christmas?'

'I don't know, dear,' began Mrs. Manners, unwilling to disappoint the child, but before she could say more Eleanor clapped her hands and cried gleefully,

'I know, oh mother, please may we do it?'

'Do what?' asked Roland, 'give a present to everybody in the lane?'

'Yes—no—at least, I mean yes,' answered Eleanor in great excitement. 'Mother dear, you know that lovely toffee you made for us on my birthday, the sort you used to make when you were a little girl. If I gave you my sixpence would that make enough to give a good many children a little piece? I would take it to-morrow and tell them it was for Christmas.'

'How silly you are, Nelly, said Judith pettishly, 'as if a mouthful of toffee would make anybody any happier.'

Eleanor's bright face clouded for a moment. 'But perhaps it might, Judy,' she said gently, 'if they had nothing nice I think they would be pleased with the toffee, and I am almost sure they would be glad to know that somebody wanted to make them happy. Don't you think it is a rather good thought, mother?'

ARE YOU MOTHER'S FAIRY GODMOTHER?

'A very good one, darling,' and Mrs. Manners added a second sixpence to the one in Nelly's little purse, 'we will go at once and buy the things.'

Roland searched for a long time, and at last produced fourpence, which he said was all he had. Eleanor took it with many thanks saying it was like the widow's mite.

'Only he isn't a widow,' objected Judith, 'and it isn't a mite, nor is it all his living.'

There was a shilling in her own pocket, and at that minute it began to feel uncomfortably heavy, but Judith was not just then in the humor to join in her little sister's kindly plan.

'Well, anyhow, it is something like it,' persisted Eleanor, 'and it is very good of him. Mother, dear, may we go into the church for a little before we buy the things, just to hear the carols?'

Judith's face flushed hotly as they went through the dusky porch into the brightly lit and prettily decorated church. She knew why impatient Eleanor, eager to get to her toffee making had asked for this delay. She had remembered Judith's love for music and a wish she had expressed a few days before to attend this very service.

'I wonder how Nelly always knows what people will like, and always thinks of nice things,' she said to herself as she walked up the aisle, and the explanation came the next moment in a line of one of her mother's favorite hymns.

'A heart at leisure from itself.'

No child who thought much of herself could have such a sweet, happy little face as Nelly had.

'Peace on earth, goodwill towards men,' rang sweetly through the church, and it seemed to Judith as though the Christmas peace did come into her heart, driving out the envy and discontent that in the light of that glorious gospel looked so small and wrong.

'Did you like it, Judith?' whispered Eleanor as they went out, 'Oh, Judith, a whole shilling. Thank you, how very good you are'.

And Judith was not quite sure whether it was the anthem or Eleanor's loving thoughtfulness that brought the better feelings into her heart.

II.

'Grandmother.'

'Yes, dear.'

'Are you awake? I am so glad. I want to talk. Grandmother, dear, isn't this a horrid Christmas?'

'Sylvia!'

'Well, perhaps not quite horrid, but very unpleasant. At any rate, it is not a nice Christmas. Now, is it, grandmother?' and Sylvia Ashley drew a low seat to her grandmother's side.

Lady Eleanor softly smoothed the shining flaxen hair, and looked fondly into the very fair face raised to hers. Sylvia was the only child of her dead son, and was all that she had left in the world. Their home had been for many years in the south of France; and as Lady Eleanor had not yet found a house which suited her, they were spending their first English Christmas within Sylvia's remembrance at a hotel.

'Is it not rather a failure of a Christmas?' Sylvia asked again, holding out her hands to the fire.

'It is rather dull for you, dear,' her grandmother said gently, 'but we must try to have a happy Christmas, and by next year I hope we may be in a home of our own again.'

'It is so cold,' complained Sylvia, with a little shiver, 'and so dull and damp, not a bit like the clear cold snow of Christmas I used to read about. I wanted to see a good snow.'

'You would find that very cold, my little Sylvia. I wish we could have put off our removal until the spring. I should have liked to show you England first then, but it seemed foolish to miss so good a chance of selling the house.'

'I have been looking out of the window this afternon,' went on Sylvia, 'and most of the people looked so cold and miserable, just as though it were not Christmas. I could not help thinking what nice times our poor people had at home.'

'We must think of England as home now, Sylvia,' said Lady Eleanor, 'and when we are settled we will see what we can do to make somebody happy.'

'I would like to make somebody happy

now', pleaded Sylvia. 'There are the children, poor little things, they look as if they never had any pleasure. Grandmother, let me go out with Stephens and buy some toys and bonbons, and to-morrow I will go into one of the poor streets to give them away. Grandmother, dear, do give me some money and let me go.' Grandmother very rarely said 'no' to any request of Sylvia's, so in a few minutes she was well wrapped up, and accompanied by the old servant who loved her almost like her own child, Sylvia went out in high spirits.

In little more than an hour she came dancing up the stairs with bright eyes and rosy cheeks, followed by Stephens, laden with parcels.

'Here I am,' she announced, throwing the door wide open, 'oh, you dear old grandmother,' giving Lady Eleanor a frantic hug, 'it has been so lovely. I feel like Christmas now, and I have found a horrid, dull, miserable place, where I am sure they never have anything nice, so they shall have a surprise to-morrow. I have some lovely toys and picture books, and heaps of bon-bons. Come in, Stephens, I want to show grandmother the things.' With eager fingers she tore off the wrappers to display her purchases, while Stephens gathered up the paper and string.

'Are they not beautiful, grandmother? Do you think children can help liking them? Oh, Stephens, thank you, what a dear old body you are. Do you know, grandmother, Stephens has actually been defending the weather, she says it does her good to see rain and slushy mud after being away so long.'

Lady Eleanor admired the purchases as much as even Sylvia desired, and it was not until after dinner that she remembered she had not told all her story.

'I quite forgot my adventure,' she said, as she drew her chair closer to the fire, and put her feet comfortably on the fender. 'I was coming out of the sweet shop when I saw the dearest little girl—not a poor child, she did look rather poor, but she was a lady's child. I longed to give her a present, so I slipped my prettiest box of chocolate into her hand. I wish you had seen how astonished she looked. But the queer thing was that I cannot have seen her before, yet her face was so familiar, a sweet pretty little face with golden hair clustering round it, and large happy-looking brown eyes, and I have just remembered that she was exactly like that miniature that you always have on your bed-room mantel-piece.'

Lady Eleanor smiled. 'Little Eleanor Graham,' she said, 'she was a dear little girl, but it is not an uncommon kind of face. Many English children have it.'

'She was your god-child.'

'Yes, her father was the vicar of our parish. Eleanor was born at a time when I had had a great sorrow, she was named after me, and I saw a great deal of her until she was about twelve, then I went abroad with your father and grandfather, and never saw her again.'

'But did not she write to you, grandmother?'

'Yes, two or three times, but she was only a child, busy with her studies, I was busy also with my little children, and constantly moving about, so the correspondence gradually ceased. I have often thought if I came to England, I should like to find Eleanor.'

'Let us try,' cried eager Sylvia, 'she would be quite like an aunt for me. I have always been so sorry my little aunts all died.'

Lady Eleanor smiled and shook her head, but Sylvia spent the next half hour in devising means for learning the present address of Eleanor, only child of the Reverend Thomas Graham, who was once vicar of Ashmeade in Norfolk.

III.

Christmas Day was fine, and Sylvia rose in a flutter of impatience. As, however, her basket was a considerable size, it was decided that she had better not go out with her gifts until dusk; so the early part of the day passed with no more exciting events than the exchange of presents between Lady Eleanor, Sylvia and Stephens, and the arrival of letters from old friends left in France. About half-past four it was decidedly dusk, and Stephens, having assured Lady Eleanor that the neighborhood selected by Sylvia, though undoubtedly very poor, was quite safe for her young lady to visit, she set out, a very bonnie Santa Claus, with a most attractive basket.

'It ought to have been a bag,' she said, looking at it with satisfaction, 'but I suppose the contents matter most. Now, Stephens, I am going to help to carry it, it is far too heavy for you alone.'

The children in a poor part of the town remembered that Christmas afternoon for many a day, and it came to be a legend of the neighborhood how a lovely young lady with blue eyes and yellow hair and an old woman carrying a basket between them came to door after door leaving the most wonderful presents that ever were seen. The children in the lane also had a story to tell of a little sweet-faced rosy girl who came to them with a bag on her arm from which she gave them white packets of toffee saying she wanted to give them something because it was Christmas and that was all she had. The toffee was nice and some ate it with no thought beyond the moment's pleasure, but to some the sweetmeat was but little compared to the smile and the loving words that were given with it.

'To think,' said a lame girl looking at the dainty parcel in her hand, 'To think that she should care to give us anything—That's the best of all.'

Just as the clock was striking six Sylvia, with her basket empty, was hastening home when she nearly ran into some one going in the opposite direction, and at the same moment a child's voice exclaimed,

'Why, I believe it is my Santa Claus.'

'And it is my little girl,' responded Sylvia stooping to kiss the pretty face while Sarah, who was proud to be trusted with Miss Eleanor, came forward to satisfy herself that it was a real lady who spoke to her.

The little group stood by a lamp so that they could see each other's faces distinctly.

'I did so want to see you again,' said Eleanor looking up with big serious eyes, 'because you know I didn't thank you for that lovely box of chocolate. I am almost sure it was you, but you went away so quickly. Are you really Santa Claus? I always thought he was an old man.'

'So did I,' laughed Sylvia, 'perhaps I am one of his relations. That looks like his bag on your arm.'

'Does it really?' asked Eleanor gravely, 'because I want it to be. I have been a little Santa Claus this afternoon. Those poor children in the lane, you know they hadn't any Christmas, so mother let us make some toffee for them. It is like she used to make when she was a little girl, so we call it Ashmeade toffee because——'

'Ashmeade!' almost screamed Sylvia, 'My dear child, you must come with me at once. You may come too,' as faithful Sarah tightened her hold of Eleanor's hand, 'Stephens, please get a cab. We must make haste back to grandmother.'

Hardly knowing what was going to happen to her, Eleanor let herself be lifted into the cab, and in a few minutes more Sylvia was hurrying her up a wide staircase and into a large warm room.

'Grandmother, grandmother,' she cried, 'I have found my dear little girl. Do look at her.'

Lady Eleanor had been dozing in her chair, and little Eleanor was stupefied by this sudden introduction, so for a minute they stared at each other in bewilderment. The child was the first to recover herself; here was the beautiful old lady of Judith's tales with the silvery hair, bright eyes and pretty color. She drew her hand from Sylvia's clasp, ran across the room and stood by the large easy chair.

'Are you mother's fairy-godmother?' she asked, looking up into the sweet old face. I think you must be, and I am so glad.'

Lady Eleanor drew the child more closely to her side.

'Eleanor,' she cried in a low voice, 'little Eleanor Graham.'

'Now I know you are the fairy-godmother,' cried Nelly, 'for you would not know I am Eleanor unless you were. But you made one little small mistake. I am Eleanor Ashley; it is Roland whose name is Graham. Mother will be so pleased. Do let us go to mother at once, she will think I am lost.'

Mrs. Manners was beginning to get alarmed at Eleanor's long absence, when Roland, who was kneeling on a chair with his face pressed close to the window looking into the darkness, called out that a carriage was stopping at the door.

'And, oh, I say, Nelly is getting out of it—and an old lady—and a young lady—oh, and Sarah.'

Judith went to open the door. Eleanor rosy and excited sprang into her mother's arms, crying out,

'Oh, mother, mother, the fairy-godmother!'

A beautiful, stately, white-haired lady came after her, and taking Mrs. Manners's hand, asked,

'Is it really my Eleanor?'

Sarah went into the kitchen, and Judith stood shyly looking on until some one lit the gas in the little sitting room and they all went in. Judith had so often imagined this scene, that she fancied she knew exactly what to say and do, and it was very mortifying, now that Lady Eleanor was really sitting by the fire talking over old times with her mother, to feel so awkward that Roland and Nelly had Sylvia's entertainment entirely left to them.

Altogether that was a wonderful evening, and it would make a very long story to tell of all that happened then and afterwards. As Judith had said, Lady Eleanor would have liked to adopt the whole family, for she quite felt that Mrs. Manners was like a child of her own.

'God has taken all my daughters,' she said, 'come and be a daughter to me, Eleanor, I really need you.'

Mrs. Manners, however, thought it was better to be in a home of her own, but when Lady Eleanor had bought a pretty place in the country she consented to come to a small house very near, and to do all in her power to fill the place of a daughter to her old friend. About the same time a sum of money which Mr. Manners had lent to an unfortunate friend was unexpectedly repaid; it had seemed a trifle in the days of their wealth, but now it was enough to enable them to live in comfort so that as Eleanor said, they might now begin 'to live happily ever after, like the end of a fairy tale.'

'And it was Nelly's plan that helped to find

your godmother after all,' said Judith, as she and her mother sat together on the next Christmas Eve, while Sylvia, Roland, and Eleanor scorched their faces over the fire making toffee.

Mrs. Manners smiled, 'Nelly's plan and Nelly's face,' she said. 'If she had not been so like my portrait at her age, Sylvia might not have noticed her. God has been very good to us in this year, Judith, and I do think we have learned some lessons from our troubles.'

'I hope I have learned not to be so horrid,' said Judith, 'I hate to remember how cross and discontented I was last Christmas Eve when all the time such beautiful things were preparing for us.'

'That is what we all need to remember, Judith. We fret and grumble about our little earthly trials and think them so hard, when if we did but think, "such beautiful things are preparing for us."'

'Mother!'

'Mother!'

'Aunt Eleanor!' came in excited cries from the three toffee makers, 'the toffee is perfectly beautiful, do come and look at it. We are going to take a piece to grandmother.'

—Lena Tyack.

Expiring Subscriptions.

Would each subscriber kindly look at the address tag on this paper? If the date thereon is December, 1901, it is time that the renewals were sent in so as to avoid losing a single copy. As renewals always date from the expiry of the old subscriptions, subscribers lose nothing by remitting a little in advance.

The Norse Yuletide.

HOW THE SCANDINAVIANS CELEBRATED THE FEAST OF JUUL.

In the Scandinavian feast of Juul, when they burned huge bonfires in honor of Thor, we discover the origin of the Yule log. The descendants of the old Norsemen, who no doubt are responsible for the custom in England, carefully preserved half of the log with which to light the fire at next Yuletide, and so we have the old English proverb, but in poetical form, by Herrick:

Part must be kept wherewith to tend
The Christmas log next year,
And where 'tis safely kept the fiend
Can do no mischief here.

The Druidical contribution to the modern Christmas celebration originated in the annual feast given in honor of the Druid god Tutanus, who corresponds to the Phoenician sun god Baal. His favorite among all trees and plants of the forest was supposed to be the mistletoe. The number of three was held in reverence by these ancient people, and, because the leaves and berries of this parasite grew in clusters of three, this, in addition to the glory of being Tutanus's favorite, made the plant sacred, and annually there was a great festival given in its honor.

In the choice and selection of the Yule log the ash tree plays a very important part. In Scandinavian mythology it is Odin's tree and was most noble, for its wood made the spear and the javelin, the oar and the mast. In their language ash means man, and the legend runs that when the sons of Bor, who were sons of Odin, formed the first man and woman they were made out of a piece of ash. This man was named Aska. And, at the present day, in Devonshire, as a relic of this pagan reverence for this tree, we find the Christmas fagot made of ash sticks, bound tightly together by green withes or bands of polland oak. The gypsies, too, and the wild hill people of Bavaria and Bohemia reverence the ash, although their legends attached to it are Christian in their origin.—Albany 'Press.'

The Little Maid's Sermon.

(Susan Teall Perry, in the 'Congregationalist.')

A little maid in pale blue hood
In front of a large brick building stood.
As she passed along, her quick eyes spied
Some words on a little box inscribed:
'Twas a box that hung in the vestibule,
Outside the door of the Charity school.

'Remember the Poor' were the words she spelled,
Then looked at the dime her small hands held;
For chocolate creams were fresh that day
In the store just across the way.
But gleams of victory shone o'er the face
As she raised her eyes to 'the money-place.'
But her arm was short and the box so high
That a gentleman heard who was passing by
'Please, sir, will you lift me just so much?
(For the tiny fingers could almost touch)—
The stranger stopped, and he quickly stood
By the sweet-faced child in the pale blue hood.

As he lifted her, she gently said,
'Would you mind it, sir, if you turned your head?
For you know I do not want to be
Like a proud, stuckup old Pharisee.'
He humored the little maid, but a smile
Played o'er his face as he stood there the while.

'Excuse me, child, but what did you say?'
The gentleman asked in a courteous way
As he took in his the wee white hand.
'I believe I didn't quite understand.'
'O, sir, don't you know? Have you never read,'
Said the child, amazed, 'what our Saviour said?

'We should not give like those hypocrite men
Who stood in the market-places then,
And gave their alms just for folks to tell,
Because they loved to be praised so well;
But give for Christ's sake from our little store
What only he sees and nobody more.
'Goodbye, kind sir, this is my way home;
I'm sorry you'll have to walk alone.'
The gentleman passed along, and thought
Of large sums given for fame it brought,
And he said, 'I never again will be
In the market-place a Pharisee.
She preached me a sermon; 'twas true and good—
That dear little maid in the pale blue hood!'

Few Friends.

'I don't make many friends,' said a young girl in the street-car. She was talking to a companion, and she made her statement with quite a superior air, as if the possession of few friends was a mark of distinction. 'If people like me, that is all right; but I never run after anyone.'

A few days later we were not surprised to hear a schoolmate say of her: 'June is not a favorite with the girls. She isn't—well, spontaneous enough, if that's the proper word for it. She never goes heartily into anything, as the rest of us do; she is always sitting back in some corner waiting to be coaxed and invited with a great deal of urgency, before she will take any part. She seems to have a fear that she will be cheapening herself if she should be genuinely obliging.'

Not to minister but to be ministered unto is the theory with which she has set out in life; not to give but to get, and that ends always in soul poverty and loneliness. —'Wellspring.'

Christmas Bells.

(Martha McCulloch-Williams, in 'Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly.')

Softly silvern, and golden clear,
The passing bells of the passing year,
Ring out! ring out! O chimes!
A knell for the rose, and the summer dead,
For the lavish autumn full richly sped,
And the blossomy April times.

Softly silvern, O Christmas bells!
Your dinsome clamor or falls or swells
In a chorus richly ringing.
Hark! hark! It swells into upper air,
To join the stave, so fine, so rare,
The earth, the heavens, are singing.

Richly silvern and high and far,
As the dazzling gleam of a falling star.
Hark to the angels crying:
'Peace upon earth! Good will to men!'
And bells from hamlet, plain and glen,
In high accord replying.

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Finland—By Elward H. Cooper, in 'Westminster Budget.'
The Bishop of Zululand on the War—London 'Times.'
The American Civil War and the Struggle in South Africa—New York 'Tribune.'
Cheapness of Portuguese Hotels—By C. Edwardes, in 'Chambers' Journal.'
Marriage in India—By Sir Edwin Arnold, in 'Daily Telegraph,' London.
The Building Department—New York 'Times.'
The Cult of Thoughtlessness—'Daily News,' London.
An Onlooker's Note-book—Manchester 'Guardian.'
Modern Corruption of Language—By Sylvanus Urban, in 'The Gentleman's Magazine.'
Comments by the Way—'The Pilot,' London.
Boys and their Ways—'The Spectator,' London.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE ARTS.

American'sm in Music—By W. J. Henderson, in New York 'Times.'
The Discovered Duchess—'Daily Telegraph,' London.
The Ideal Playgoer—Address by Mr. G. Alexander, in 'The Standard,' London.

CONCERNING THINGS LITERARY.

Thanksgiving—Poem, by W. D Howells.
Angelus—Poem, from the Italian of Cesare Rossi.
Lost Leonids—'Daily Chronicle,' London.
The Poet and Fate—By George Barlow.
The Life of Lord Russell of Killowen—Reviews from 'The Times,' 'Morning Leader' and 'Daily News,' London.
'Q's' Short Stories—Reviews from 'The Spectator,' 'The Speaker,' 'Daily Telegraph' and 'Daily Chronicle,' London.
Did Shakespeare write Bacon
'A Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones'—Extract from sermon by Phillips Brooks.

HINTS OF THE PROGRESS OF KNOWLEDGE.

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Nan's Ride with Santa Claus.

(By E. Louise Liddell in the 'Ledger Monthly.')

'Now, mamma, I'm really and truly going to watch to-night, till I see Santa Claus,' said Nan.

Mamma smiled, as she put an extra pillow under the little girl's head. She had not forgotten how Nan had gone off to Dreamland last Christmas Eve while watching for Santa.

'I don't see what made mamma laugh,' thought Nan, when she was left alone. 'I'm a whole year older than I was a year ago, and of course I can keep awake.'

But it was tiresome waiting. The clock struck nine, then ten, then eleven. 'I don't s'pose he'll be here much before twelve,' said Nan, with a sleepy yawn.

Almost at the same instant she heard a faint tinkling of bells, followed by a scuffling sound in the chimney, and then a queer little figure bounded into the room.

Of course, it must be Santa. There were the rosy cheeks and snowy beard, the fur coat and big pack. But this little man wasn't more than half as large as Nan had imagined Santa Claus to be.

'Dear me!' she said to herself. 'I wonder why they always have such a big, tall Santa Claus at all the Christmas trees?'

But the litle girl was too much interested in watching her visitor to waste time in wondering about his size, for he was very busy filling her stockings. A shining gold thimble went into the toe. A nice sealskin pocket-book just filled the foot. Handkerchiefs, gloves and candies followed. Then Santa took a Noah's ark from his pocket and looked at it.

'The idea!' thought Nan. 'I guess he doesn't know I'm nine years old, or he wouldn't think of leaving that. I do wish he'd look at me!'

NAN PERCHED ON SANTA'S BROAD SHOULDERS.

But Santa swung his pack on his back and seemed to be getting ready to leave, so Nan coughed gently.

Santa started and looked around. 'Bless me!' he exclaimed. 'I had no idea you were awake!'

'Why, I stayed awake on purpose to see you,' said Nan.

'Well, I declare!' said Santa, with a rollicking laugh. 'I wish you a merry Christmas, my dear. Sorry I can't stop and talk awhile, but you know this is my busy day —night, I mean.'

'I suppose you couldn't bring your sleigh and the dear little reindeer down the chimney, so I could see them?' hinted Nan.

Santa shook his head.

'No, they draw the line at chimneys,' he said. 'Couldn't get 'em down. But see here! What's to hinder your taking a ride with me?'

Nan's eyes shone with delight.

'Oh, will you take me?' she cried. The words were hardly out of her mouth before she was gliding up the chimney, perched on Santa's broad shoulders. And the next moment she was on the roof and Santa was bundling her up in a long sealskin coat that covered her from head to foot. Nan clapped her hands as she caught sight of the dainty sleigh and the eight prancing steeds, who were tossing their heads as though they were impatient to be off.

Santa helped her into the sleigh and tucked her in. 'Just wait a minute,' he said, 'while I get my rope-ladder out of the chimney.'

'Ladder?' repeated Nan, in surprise.

'Yes, ladder,' returned Santa. 'You didn't really suppose I could run up the wall or the chimney-side like a fly, did you?'

A moment later, Santa cracked his whip, the bells jingled, and away flew the reindeer, their tiny hoofs flying in the air.

'Oh, my, what fun!' cried Nan, as they whirled past chimney tops, and leaped (Nan couldn't tell how) from one roof to another.

'You see, I had made all my calls in your neighborhood before I stopped at your house,' Santa explained, as he drew up before a very aristocratic-looking chimney. 'I guess you'd like to go in here with me.' And the next thing Nan knew, she was making a journey down the chimney with her funny little friend.

'I don't let the grass grow under my feet,' said Santa, as he stepped out of the fireplace.

'I think you are a very rapid man,' said Nan, who was a litle bewildered by this sudden change.

Santa laughed, and going up to a big Christmas tree that stood in one corner of the dimly-lighted room, he began to load it with all sorts of beautiful things.

'Isn't it nice here?' said Nan, looking up at the lofty ceiling and the glittering chandeliers. 'And, oh, do you hear that lovely music? I'm sure there's a band somewhere.'

The door leading into the next room was slightly ajar. Nan crept toward it, and peeping in, could hardly keep from crying out at the sight that met her eyes. For there was a company of little folks, arrayed in the quaint costumes of years before. The boys in knee-breeches, gaily colored vests, vel-

vet coats and lace ruffles, with bewigged heads. The girls in trailing robes and high-heeled slippers, with high-topped combs on their powdered puffs and curls. They might one and all have just stepped from the massive picture frames which hung on the walls, enclosing the portraits of their great-great-grandfathers and grandmothers.

They were dancing a minuet, and Nan watched with wondering eyes, while the miniature men and women moved through the stately measures of the graceful dance. She was sorry when the music stopped, and each cavalier, with a stately bow, led his wee partner to a seat.

At that moment the lights on the Christmas tree flashed up.

'The tree! the tree!' cried the excited little folks, starting to their feet, and crowding toward the doorway where Nan was concealed. Santa had barely time to whisk her up the chimney before a joyful shout from the little men and women told the listeners that the tree had been discovered.

'A narrow escape,' said Santa, puffing and laughing, as they reached the roof.

'Oh, but wasn't it lovely!. It was just like a picture,' cried Nan. And her head was so full of quaint costumes and sweet music that she did not notice how long they had been riding, or how many calls Santa had made before he invited her to get out again.

'Have to go through the window here,' said Santa, as he hung the rope-lader down the side of the house; 'because they have a stove in the fireplace.'

Nan thought that a stove wasn't of much use without any fire in it, and she couldn't help noticing that it was a very poor house they had come to. Rags were stuffed in the broken window panes, and there was scarcely any furniture in the room. A candle was burning dimly on a table, by which a pale-faced woman had fallen asleep over her work. On a cot in one corner lay two hungry-looking little fellows, fast asleep. A scrap of paper was pinned to the ragged quilt.

'See if you can read it,' said Santa. 'I left my specs at home,' The letter was printed in very uneven characters, but Nan managed to make it out.

'Deer Santy Claws' (it read) 'please bring us sumthin for dinner an' a noo soot of klose, an' we wud like sum toys if it wa'n't too much trubbel, 'n nuts and kandy, yours trooly, Tom and Jerry.—Extry, we never had no krismus all our lives.'

Nan felt very sober when she had finished reading this letter, and she was sure she saw tears in Santa's eyes. But he went to rummaging his pack, and fished out two good warm suits of clothes and some heavy shoes and stockings. Nuts and candy and some toys followed, and a big turkey and some vegetables went into the empty cupboard.

Then Santa looked at the poor mother.

'She ought to have a warm dress and shawl,' said Nan, quickly.

'Anything else?' asked Santa.

'Well, I should think some money to buy coal and flour and such things would do her lots of good,' said Nan.

Santa pinned a five-dollar bill to the heavy shawl he had thrown over the sleeping woman. Then he blew out the candle, and he and Nan stole softly out of the room.

'Oh, dear!' said Nan, with a sigh, when they were on their way again. 'Are there many folks as poor as that?'

'Too many,' replied Santa, looking very grave. 'And some even poorer. The worst of it is, I can't possibly get around to them all every year.'

'People ought to help you,' said Nan.

'Yes, they ought,' returned Santa. Then, he added: 'Now, I dare say you have some cast-off clothing and old toys at your house that would help to make a Merry Christmas for some poor child, or children.'

'Yes, indeed,' said Nan, 'and I'll ask mamma to let me give away a big basket of things to-morrow.'

Then Nan fell into a brown study, but she wasn't thinking about powdered wigs and dainty costumes this time, but of poor little Tom and Jerry.

'I believe,' said Santa, after he had made several more visits, 'I'll have to take a run home and get some more presents.'

'Home!' exclaimed Nan. 'Why, do you live anywhere in particular?'

'To be sure,' replied Santa, coolly; 'I live up close by the North Pole, my dear. I have a big storage house up there.'

'Oh, how funny,' said Nan. 'But how do you ever get anything to put in your storage house?'

'Well, I don't mind telling you,' said Santa, 'though it's a great secret. You see, in the summertime, I just put on my business suit and go 'round to the stores. I pick up a good many nice things on the bargain counters.'

'My,' exclaimed Nan, 'how queer! But it must be lots of work to get your goods up to the North Pole.'

'Oh, don't mind that,' said Santa. 'I know all the short cuts.'

'Dear me!' said Nan. 'And to think that so many people have been trying for so many years to find the North Pole! Why don't you show some of them where it is?'

'Bless me!' cried Santa, after a burst of laughter, 'they wouldn't thank me for spoiling their fun. Don't you see, they really enjoy making a "dash for the pole," and taking up relief expeditions once in a while.'

Nan and Santa had left cities and towns behind them long before this, and were flying over the frozen ground. After a while, Nan noticed great mountains of ice looming up on every side.

'I suppose there isn't any danger of our getting lost, is there?' said she, looking around a little fearfully.

'Lost!' said Santa. 'Why, I couldn't get lost. See, there's the North Star. That is my guiding star.'

'Oh!' cried Nan, 'what is that—a fire?' For while Santa was talking, a deep pink glow had crept above the horizon. The icy peaks around them took on a rose-colored hue. Then streaks of orange, purple and red shot up into the heavens.

'Don't be alarmed,' said Santa. 'That's only the Aurora Borealis.'

Nan had never dreamed of anything half so beautiful, and thought she would never tire of looking at the wondrous sight. But her eyes had seen so many strange things since she left home that they began to grow heavy, and her head would nod to and fro.

'Better take a nap,' said Santa. 'I'll wake you when we get there.'

'You don't suppose you'd forget —' said Nan, doubtfully.

'No, indeed,' said the little man.

A moment later Nan was fast asleep, with her head resting on Santa's broad shoulder.

* * * * * *

'Nan, little sleepyhead, wake up!' cried a familiar voice.

'Have we got there?' asked the little girl, drowsily.

'Got where?' said the same voice.

Then Nan opened her eyes and saw mamma bending over her.

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LESSON XIII.—DECEMBER 29.

Review--Joseph to Moses.

Genesis xxxvii to Exodus xv. Read Psalm cv.

Daily Readings.

1901.

Monday, Dec. 30.—Acts i., 1-14.
Tuesday, Dec. 31.—Is. xlii., 1-8.

1902.

Wednesday, Jan. 1.—Joel ii., 27-32.
Thursday, Jan. 2.—John xiv., 23-29.
Friday, Jan. 3.—John xvi., 1-11.
Saturday, Jan 4.—Heb. ix., 22-28.
Sunday, Jan. 5.—Acts. i., 15-26.

Golden Text.

'If God be for us, who can be against us?' —Romans viii., 31.

Review Questions.

LESSON I.—GENESIS xxxvii., 12-36.

1. Who was Joseph's father? his grandfather? his great-grandfather?
2. How many sons had Jacob? What did they do for a living?
3. Why did Joseph's older brothers dislike him?
4. Why was his father particularly fond of him?
5. How did Joseph's brothers treat him when he went to see how they were?
6. Which of his brothers wanted to save his life?
7. What did they tell Jacob about Joseph?
8. For how much did these men sell their brother?
9. Where was Joseph taken, and to whom was he sold?

LESSON II.—GEN. xxxix., 20 to xl., 15.

1. Joseph lost his reputation, but preserved his good character, how did the Lord God show his approval of this?
2. How did Joseph become acquainted with Pharaoh's butler and baker?
3. What did they each dream?
4. How was Joseph able to interpret their dreams?
5. What did Joseph ask the butler to do for him?

LESSON III.—GEN. xli., 38-49.

1. What is the Golden Text for this lesson? how does it apply to Joseph?
2. How did Joseph get out of prison?
3. Why did Pharaoh decide to place Joseph over his kingdom, next to himself in power?
4. How old was Joseph when God exalted him to this place of power?
5. Was he a man whom God could trust?

If thou wilt suffer God to guide thee,
And trust in Him through all thy ways,
He'll give thee strength whate'er betide thee.
And bear thee through the evil days:
Who trusts in God's unchanging love
Builds on the Rock which naught can move.

LESSON IV.—GEN. xlv., 1-15.

1. Why did Joseph's brothers go to Egypt?
2. Did they recognize Joseph when they saw him? Did he recognize them?
3. How did he treat them?
4. When he made himself known to them what did he say?
5. What message did he send to his father?

LESSON V.—GEN. l., 15-26.

1. Where was Jacob buried? Why?
2. Where were Joseph's brothers with all their households at this time?
3. What message did they send to Joseph?
4. How did Joseph receive their penitence?
5. How does the Lord Jesus receive our penitent prayers?
6. Draw some lessons from the life of Joseph?
7. In what ways was he a type of the Lord Jesus Christ?

LESSON VI.—EXODUS i., 1-14.

1. Name the twelve tribes of Israel.
2. Why did the new king of Egypt fear the Israelites?
3. How did he oppress them?
4. Did the Lord God care when his people were in trouble?
5. What covenant had he made with their ancestors?

LESSON VII.—EXODUS ii., 1-10.

1. Why did his mother have to hide little Moses when he was a baby?
2. What did she do when she could no longer hide him?
3. Who watched over the little baby? Who else was watching to see what would happen?
4. Who found the baby? What did she do for him? What part had little Miriam in this?

LESSON VIII.—ISAIAH v., 8-30.

1. To what does God compare his people?
2. What did he do for his vineyard?
3. What did his vineyard do in return?
4. How does strong drink ruin men?
5. How does sin take men into captivity?
6. Is there anything we can do to rid our land of the curse of intemperance?
7. Have you signed the pledge? Have you asked anyone else to do so?

LESSON IX.—EXODUS iii., 1-12.

1. Why did Moses have to leave Egypt after growing up at court?
2. How did God appear to him?
3. What did God say to Moses?
4. What did he tell him to do? What promise did he give him?
5. What did Moses do?

Fear not, I am with thee,
Oh, be not dismayed;
For I am thy God,
I will still give thee aid:
I'll strengthen thee, help thee,
And cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my gracious
Omnipotent hand.

LESSON X.—EXODUS xi., 1-10.

1. What were the ten plagues which God sent to Egypt?
2. Why did he send them?
3. What made Pharaoh finally let the people go?
4. Is it better to obey God the first time he speaks to us than to wait until he has to make us obey?

LESSON XI.—EXODUS xii., 1-17.

1. Tell the story of the first Passover?
2. What did it mean to the children of Israel?
3. What does it mean to us?
4. How does it typify Christ's sacrifice for us?
5. Can we be saved in any other way but through the blood of Jesus?

Blessed be the fountain of blood
To a world of sinners revealed;
Blessed be the dear son of God,
Only by His stripes we are healed:
Though I've wandered far from the fold,
Bringing to my heart pain and woe;
Wash me in the blood of the Lamb
And I shall be whiter than snow.

LESSON XII.—EXODUS xiv., 13-27.

1. How did God lead his people?
2. How did he protect them from their enemies?
3. How did he take them across the Red Sea?
4. What happened to the hosts of Pharaoh?
5. What lessons may we draw from this account?

C. E. Topic.

Sun., Dec. 29.—Topic.—Numbering our days.—Psalm xc.

Junior C. E. Topic.

NEWNESS OF LIFE.

Mon., Dec. 23.—A new man.— 2 Cor. v., 17.
Tues., Dec. 24.—A new name.—Rev. iii., 12.
Wed., Dec. 25.—A new spirit.—Ezek. xi., 19.
Thu., Dec. 26.—A new life.—Rom. vi., 4.
Fri., Dec. 27.—A new song.—Ps. xl., 3.
Sat., Dec. 28.—A new home.—2 Cor. v., 1.
Sun., Dec. 29.—Topic.—New life in the New Year.—Eph., iv., 22-24; Col. iii., 8-10.

[For the 'Messenger.'

Cigarettes and the Boys.

In the action taken by reform societies, and in much that is said and written in favor of checking the evidently fast growing habit of youthful cigarette smoking, the appeal is principally addressed to law-makers, as though the great remedy for the evil is to be found in the prohibition and the sale to minors. This is one remedy, it is true, and no one who has any appreciation of the situation can help but admire the prayerful effort and consecrated devotion of the women of the W.C.T.U. and kindred societies who are so actively engaged in trying, as far as possible, to remove this temptation out of the way of our boys.

I believe with all my heart in the prohibition of the liquor traffic, and, on the same principle, I believe in prohibiting the sale of cigarettes to minors. At the same time, is it not true that the force of example, especially in regard to the use of cigarettes by boys demands a larger share of attention than it sometimes receives, even from those who have this matter most on their hearts. Is it not true that if it were not for the influence of the example of fathers and many professors of religion, some of them holding high positions in the churches, the need for an appeal to law would not be nearly as urgent or the enforcement of prohibitory measures nearly so difficult?

Here, for instance, is a father. He says it is no harm for him to use tobacco, and so he indulges his appetite. Now, of what use is it for that father to say to his young son, Now, my son smoking is a bad habit, and, I hope, you will never learn, or, if you have already begun, I hope you will give it up at once. We all know how little might that father's words would have on the mind and conscience of his dear boy. Or, perchance, it may be a Sunday-school superintendent. He enjoys his pipe or cigar, and it comes to the knowledge of the school-class that the superintendent indulges in the habit, to what purpose would it be for that superintendent to lecture his school-class against the use of tobacco, or how old would those bright boys have to be before they would be prepared to say, 'physician heal thyself.'

Or we might suppose, if such a thing were supposable, that our would be reformer, in this line, was even a minister of the gospel. But, in some way or other, it leaks out that the pastor smokes; how long would it take for that indulging minister to convince one intelligent boy that it is wrong to smoke a cigarette.

If practical Christianity means anything it means denying self, in the interests of others. Jesus has said, 'If any man would be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me daily.' A thing in itself may or may not be injurious, but if our indulgence in it is a cause of offence to a weaker brother, there the law of Christ prohibits our indulgence in it. So, I would say in regard to the cigarette agitation, let us have law and let us have precept, above all, though let us have the example that is always safe for the young to follow. Thus only will we be able to prove the sincerity of our profession, when we say we love the boys and are interested in their welfare.

J. E. BELL.

42 Czar street, Toronto.

A Modern Daniel.

A young banker, a member of the Church of Christ, was called upon to respond to a toast at the State Bankers' Association Banquet, in Indianapolis. He was asked to speak on behalf of the rising generation—the younger bankers of Indiana. He did so in a very honest, manly, and straightforward manner. At the close of his speech, he proposed to drink a health to the older bankers of the State, whose wise counsel and kindly consideration had so aided the younger men in their efforts; and there, in the presence of 200 guests, the wealthiest and most fashion-

able of Indiana's people, who had been sipping costly champagne and Rhine wine from thin and delicate glasses, this business young man, in his maiden speech, dared to say: 'I propose that we drink a health to the older bankers of the State, and that we drink it in Clear, Cold, Pure Water!' Every glass was raised, and as they drank pure water, every guest felt the force of the object lesson. It took courage to teach that lesson, but it was well taught.—'National Advocate.'

They All Drank.

It is the business of certain agencies to keep a record of the name, position, and standing of the business men of the country. Careful men are employed to collect this information, and it includes not only the amount of property which the parties are worth, but also their standing in regard to punctuality, promptness, integrity, temperance, morals, etc.

A number of years ago a certain firm of four men in Boston were rated as 'A 1.' They were rich, prosperous, young, and prompt.

One of them had a curiosity to see how they were rated, and found these facts on the book and was satisfied; but at the end these words were added: 'But they all drink.'

He thought it a good joke at the time; but a few years later, two of them were dead, another was a drunkard, and the fourth was poor and living partly on charity.

That one little note at the end of their rating was the most important and significant of all the facts collected and embodied in their description.—'Christian Endeavor World.'

Correspondence

Bethlehem, N. H.

Dear Editor,—My brother took the 'Northern Messenger' one year, and I am taking it this year, and we like it very much. I have two brothers and two sisters living. My eldest sister died three years next January. My eldest brother died a year ago last July.

ALICE M.

Black Cape, Que.

Dear Editor,—This is the fourth time I have written to the 'Messenger.' I got nine subscribers for the 'Messenger' this year. Four of them were new. The last time I wrote to you I had six sisters, but now I have seven. I am corresponding with a girl in Massachusetts. Her name is Mary. I go to school and I am in the fifth grade. I like the correspondence and the little folks' page, and the Find-the-place Almanac best.

W. M. C.

Smithville.

Dear Editor,—Once before I wrote to the 'Messenger.' As I saw my letter was printed and several correspondents made mention of it, I thought I would write again and give you a puzzle. I have only one sister, and when I was born she was two years and three months old, but at our next birthdays we will both be sixteen years old. Can any of the readers give an answer to this puzzle?

EVANGELINE.

Plaster Rock, N. B.

Dear Editor,—I wrote to the 'Messenger' last summer and it was printed so I thought I would write again. My sister Geneva now corresponds with Effie Erb, Tintern, Ont. The mill has stopped now and will not begin again till spring. My only pets are two cats named Kittie and Romp. I would like to correspond with Ethel M. B., Banks, Ont., if she would write first. My address is

HELEN M. SHAW,

Mindemoya, Ont.

Dear Editor,—We live on a farm which borders on a lake, called Mindemoya. Our school is about two miles distant. We walk to school in summer and drive in winter. We have a Presbyterian church; three preachers preach in it: a Presbyterian preacher, a Methodist, and a Baptist. I have four sisters and one brother and one grandma and one grandpa. I am in the third class. We have two cats and one dog. The dog's name is Tobie. We have twenty head of cattle, eight milking cows, nineteen pigs, forty chickens, forty turkeys and six horses.

ETHEL M. L. (Aged 11.)

North Bedeque, P. E. I.

Dear Editor,—It is a long time since I have written, and I think it is about time. I will tell you about the mistake we made about Thanksgiving; well, we got two geese killed and were sitting at the table when we found out that Thanksgiving was not till next Thursday. Oh, well, we said we would have both Thursdays. My papa, sister, brother, hired man, and myself took out all the potatoes this year. It's a terrible nasty job, is it not? I go to school and study, fifth reader, British history, grammar, Canadian history, geography and French. I like going to school very well. We have a lovely teacher. We have had very little snow yet. The winters are cold, but we have good times all the same. We live near the church and school. For pets we have one dog called Spot, two cats, and a little kitten, we call Topsy.

JENNIE R. (Aged 13.)

Mount Pleasant.

Dear Editor,—I am a little girl eight years old. My little sister takes the 'Messenger,' and she likes it very much. My mama took the 'Messenger' five years when she was a little girl. I have four sisters and a pet kitten, and I call him Peter. I have a colt and I call her Nell, and she can drink milk and likes it. Papa is going to make her grow big as any other horse.

LIZZIE M.

Mount Pleasant.

Dear Editor,—I take the 'Messenger' and like it very much. I have not seen any letters from Mount Pleasant, so I thought I would write one. I have four sisters and no brothers. We have three working horses and a spring colt. We have had an extremely dry summer and autumn which has caused the grain and vegetable crop to be very light.

FLORA M. (Aged 12.)

Wilsonville, Ont.

Dear Editor,—I would like to tell you how well I enjoy the 'Little Folks' pages and the 'Correspondence' in the 'Messenger.' I have been sick and not able to go to school for more than a year, cannot read much at one time, then I enjoy your pages. I have a pair of canaries. One is a nice singer. I lately had three Bantam fowls given me. I love pets and try to take good care of them. Our Sunday-school takes the 'Messenger', and we used one of your temperance lessons. I belong to Wilsonville's Sunday-school and have an excellent teacher, Mrs. Frank Riddle. I dearly loved my day school teacher, Mr. Chas. Walker, when I was able to go to school. I improve slowly and hope to be of some use in the world yet. I send you texts.

LOIS R. N.

[Thank you for sending the texts. We hope you will soon be quite strong again.—Ed.]

North East Point, N.S.

Dear Editor,—As I saw quite a lot of letters in the 'Messenger,' I thought I would like to write one too. I have five sisters and only two brothers. Two of my sisters are married; one has three children, of whom one is a little baby. Their names are Mathias, William and Sidney. The pets I have are three cats, one dog named General Grant, four cows and one horse. His name is Dan. My father is a fisherman. We have a lot of flowers in summer, both in and out of the house. One of my sisters lives in the same house with us. I do not go to school, it is about two and a half miles from our house. I had my birthday on Nov. 19. We have taken the 'Messenger' for a number of years, and the last two or three it has come in my name. One of my brothers is lame, and one of my sisters too.

JOSEPHINE C.

Narrows, N. B.

Dear Editor,—I have been taking the 'Messenger' for nearly three years and like it very much. I like to read the letters in it. I have a pet dog, cat, and a hen. My hen is very tame. She will eat out of my hand. Her name is Victoria. My dog's name is Buff and my cat's name is Edward. I live on a farm of over three hundred acres. We keep seven milking cows. I go to school and I am in the third book and I am half through it. I live by the river and it is very pleasant to see the boats go by. I was not down to see the Duke and Duchess. At Sunday-school I get two papers. I am nine years old.

LEWIS S. A.

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HOUSEHOLD.

The Christmas Dinner.

HOW TO STUFF AND BAKE TURKEY.

Select a turkey weighing ten to twelve pounds. Dress it carefully, stuff with one pint or three cupfuls of bread crumbs, seasoned with one-fourth of a teaspoonful each of salt and pepper, one-half teaspoonful each of poultry seasoning, chopped parsley and sage, one teaspoonful of butter and a little chopped onion. This makes a dry, crumbly stuffing, says 'Good Housekeeping.' If a moist stuffing is preferred, use hot water or milk and a beaten egg. Sew up the openings in the skin, place the fowl in a pan, rub with butter and dredge with salt, pepper and flour. Put in a hot oven. When the flour is brown, add a half cupful or more of water. Baste often and add more water as needed. Allow from three to four hours for a 12-pound turkey. When it is tender and well browned, place it on a platter, garnish with parsley or celery tops and serve with brown gravy.

OLD-FASHIONED CHICKEN PIE.

Cut two chickens in pieces—that is, first and second joints, wings, back, breast and neck; leave the breast whole; remove the skin from all parts and lay them in a stewpan, the inferior parts first, the breasts on top; nearly cover with cold water and allow it to come to a boil quickly; then simmer very slowly until tender, adding a sliced onion, half a small carrot, sliced, three stalks of celery, a bay leaf, a bit of mace, and salt and pepper when about half done. Cook this the day before and let it stand in the gravy all night. The next day line a deep dish with very thin slices of cold boiled pork. By the way, you may cook this pork two or three days beforehand. It is an admirable thing to have in the house at holiday times. Take a thick cut of well-cured larding pork and boil it until very tender, set aside in as cold a place as possible. It is delicious if thinly sliced to serve with any kind of cold meat, game or poultry.

Line your dishes then with slices of this cut like writing paper: lay on it the chicken freed from bones, but left in rather large pieces, sprinkle with salt and pepper, about midway of the dish, placing another layer of very thin pork with two tablespoonfuls of butter into a saucepan; stir in two of flour and dilute with three half-pints of the gravy, heated and strained; simmer three minutes, season with salt and pepper and pour over the chicken. Cover with good paste; cut a hole in the centre and decorate with leaves of paste. Bake for an hour and a quarter.

A CHEAP GOOD PLUM PUDDING.

Wash and scrape a pound of carrots in the ordinary way as for boiling; now scrape these fine, or grate them on a bread-grater; crumble small two or three boiled mealy potatoes, half a pound of flour, the same weight of bread-crumbs, half a pound of suet chopped fine, two teaspoonfuls of mixed spice, a large pinch of salt; mix these things together with a pound of sugar.

Then peel and chop a pound of apples, stone a pound of raisins, and wash a pound of currants. Add these to the other mixture, and mix with milk or water to a moist paste. Boil in a cloth for four hours, or if in a greased basin, half an hour longer.

In boiling all puddings, be sure that the water boils when the pudding is put into the saucepan, and that the saucepan is large enough—not for the pudding just to slip in, but to have plenty of room for the water all round it, but do not let it cover it at the top; boil fast and pull it up from the bottom occasionally, and add fresh water as it decreases.

CREAM PUFFS.

Put one cup of boiling water in a small saucepan. Set on the stove. Add a little less than one-half cup of shortening (half butter and the other half lard). While boiling add one even cup of sifted flour. Stir until smooth and free from lumps. Remove from the stove. When cool add three eggs, one at a time, and stir thoroughly. Drop the dough on buttered tins in round cakes. Smooth it out thin and flat. Now take a spoonful of dough, and with a silver knife drop pieces from the spoon roughly on top of the flat cakes you have made, so they will look very rough and stand up in points. You can make them any size you like. Bake 25 minutes in a hot oven. Do not open the oven door until they have been in 10 minutes, then close carefully and quickly. One-third of a cup of shortening is sufficient. When the cakes are done and cooled off put them in a stone jar and cover up for a few hours before filling.

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